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LETTER DATED 26 AUGUST 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF RWANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward to you herewith a joint communiqué that was issued following the meeting between the Prime Minister of Rwanda, Mr. Pierre Celestin Rwigema, and the Prime Minister of Zaire, Mr. Kengo Wa Dondo, who was in Rwanda for an official visit on 21 and 22 August 1996 (see annex).

The Government of Rwanda welcomes the outcome of this meeting.

The Government of Rwanda wishes to reiterate to the international community that it will spare no efforts in exploring home-grown initiatives to address the problems of the Great Lakes region, within the framework of the Nairobi Declaration of 7 January 1995, the Cairo Declaration of 29 November 1995, the Tunis Declaration of 18 March 1996 and the summit of the Heads of State of the region at Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania on 24 and 25 June 1996.

In the above-mentioned declarations the countries of the region have committed themselves individually and collectively on specific measures with a view to finding appropriate solutions to the problems of their region.

The Government of Rwanda would like to restate its position regarding the proposal to convene an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region. Such a conference can only be helpful if the efforts of the countries of the region have not succeeded. It is only then and following a request by the countries of the region themselves that the idea of a regional conference under the auspices of the United Nations could be helpful.

The decisions and measures contained in the joint communiqué of 21 and 22 August 1996 by the Prime Ministers of Rwanda and Zaire deserve the support of the international community in order to facilitate the smooth and orderly repatriation of all Rwandan refugees from Zaire.

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You may also wish to note that, in addition, the Governments of Zaire and Rwanda agreed on other measures of closer cooperation in the areas of security at their common borders, the judiciary, the return of property and in the area of economic cooperation within the framework of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL).

Other recent developments that might be of interest to members of the United Nations Security Council include the voluntary repatriation of thousands of Rwandan refugees from Burundi to Rwanda. As at 26 August 1996, 96,000 Rwandan refugees had gone back to their respective rural communities in Rwanda. The remaining 4,000 Rwandan refugees who are still in Burundi are likely to return to Rwanda by the end of this month.

Finally, I would like to request the circulation of the present letter and the attached joint communiqué as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Gideon KAYINAMURA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Rwanda to the United Nations

Annex

[Original: French]

Joint communiqué issued following the official visit to Rwanda by the Prime Minister of Zaire from 21 to 22 August 1996

1. At the invitation of His Excellency Mr. Pierre Celestin Rwigema, Prime Minister of the Rwandese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Kengo Wa Dondo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Zaire, paid an official visit to the Rwandese Republic from 21 to 22 August 1996.

2. The Zairian delegation was led by His Excellency Mr. Kengo Wa Dondo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Zaire, assisted by His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marie Kititwa Tumansi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and His Excellency Grand Admiral Mavua Mudima, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence, Security and Veterans Affairs.

3. The Rwandan delegation was led by His Excellency Mr. Pierre Celestin Rwigema, Prime Minister of the Rwandese Republic, assisted by Mr. Anastase Gasana, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mr. Patrick Mazimhaka, Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Integration, Mr. Pie Mugabo, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, and Colonel André Rwigamba, directeur de cabinet in the Ministry of National Defence.

4. During their talks, the two Heads of Government reviewed the state of relations between Zaire and Rwanda, focusing, in particular, on the following points:

1. Repatriation of Rwandan refugees in Zaire;

2. Security on the two countries' common borders;

3. Repatriation of property;

4. Zairian refugees in Rwanda;

5. Cooperation in judicial matters;

6. Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL).

4.1 Repatriation of Rwandan refugees

The two Heads of Government agreed as follows:

A. To make feasible the massive, organized and unconditional repatriation of all Rwandan refugees. To this end, the Zairian Government undertakes to proceed with the gradual closing of the camps and to ensure the rapid repatriation of Rwandan refugees, and the Rwandan Government undertakes to adopt

all the measures needed to ensure the safe return and settlement in its territory of these refugees;

B. To organize cross-border visits, mainly to the refugee and transit camps, by the authorities of the two countries;

C. To continue the efforts to separate innocent people who fled the fighting or were forced into exile by the militia, former members of the Rwandan armed forces and former Rwandan government officials from those who would intimidate them;

D. To request the international community to extend humanitarian assistance to refugees repatriated to Rwanda with a view to creating conditions that would be conducive to their settlement.

4.2 Security on the two countries' common borders

The two Heads of Government agreed as follows:

A. To prevent each country's territory from being used as a base for operations aimed at destabilizing the other;

B. To continue the efforts to disarm the armed members of the former Rwandan armed forces and the Interahamwe militia, and to seek and destroy arms caches wherever they may be found;

C. To exchange all relevant security information.

4.3 Repatriation of property

The two Heads of Government decided to establish a Main Commission on Repatriation of Property, comprising the following subcommissions:

- The subcommission on Rwandese property in Zaire;
- The subcommission on stolen Zairian property in Rwanda;
- The Rwanda/Zaire/International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) tripartite subcommission, which will shortly release its conclusions concerning the technical requirements for take-off of the Air Zaire Boeing 737 aircraft.

4.4 Zairian refugees in Rwanda

The two Heads of Government agreed that Zairian refugees in Rwanda would be repatriated with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

4.5 Cooperation in judicial matters

The two Heads of Government agreed to cooperate in judicial matters, particularly with the International Tribunal for Rwanda in the search for

persons responsible for genocide and alleged perpetrators of crimes against humanity committed in Rwanda from April to July 1994, through the implementation of the convention on cooperation in judicial matters between the Republic of Burundi, the Rwandese Republic and the Republic of Zaire, signed at Kigali on 21 June 1975.

4.6 Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL)

The two Heads of Government undertook to revitalize the CEPGL organs without delay.

5. In addition, the two Heads of Government undertook to bring into operation immediately the various subcommissions established at Goma on 1 September 1994 and at Bujumbura on 10 June 1995, following the ministerial meetings which had, inter alia, sought to consider by mutual agreement the problems relating to:

A. The repatriation of Rwandese refugees;

B. Mutual security;

C. Property taken to Zaire, with a view to its restitution.

6. In view of the magnitude of the damage inflicted on Zaire by the massive and prolonged presence of Rwandan refugees in Zairian territory, the two Heads of Government again called on the international community to grant increased assistance to Zaire.

7. On the occasion of the visit to Kigali by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Zaire, His Excellency Mr. Kengo Wa Dondo, the two Heads of Government reviewed the current situation in the Great Lakes region, particularly the situation in Burundi following the coup d'état perpetrated in that country on 25 July 1996. In this connection, they reaffirmed the commitments made by their Governments at Arusha and Kampala to the re-establishment of an institutional framework and to national reconciliation.

8. At the end of their visit, His Excellency Mr. Kengo Wa Dondo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Zaire, and the delegation accompanying him expressed their gratitude to the Rwandese Government for the warm and fraternal welcome extended to them upon their arrival in the "land of 1,000 hills".

9. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Zaire took the opportunity to invite the Prime Minister of the Rwandese Republic to accompany him on a visit to the Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire.

10. The Prime Minister of the Rwandese Republic warmly accepted this invitation. He thanked the Prime Minister of the Republic of Zaire and his delegation for having paid this visit to Rwanda with a view to further strengthening the ties of friendship and cooperation between the peoples of the two countries.

11. The talks between the two Heads of Government took place in an atmosphere of mutual candour, understanding and confidence.

DONE at Kigali on 22 August 1996.

For the Government of the
Rwandese Republic:

(Signed)
Pierre Celestin RWIGEMA
Prime Minister

For the Government of the
Republic of Zaire:

(Signed)
KENGO wa DONDO
Prime Minister